

## SEA and AA

# Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment- the Challenges and Some Possible Actions and Approaches

## “Appropriate Assessment Training Workshop

Joint Initiative -Offaly County Council, Kildare County Council in association with Environmental Protection Agency with support from EPA STRIVE Programme.

Tullamore Court Hotel

1<sup>st</sup> June 2010

Tadhg O’Mahony- SEA Section

GIS Graphics by Tony Kent - GIS Section

Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Protection Agency

# Outline of Presentation

- **The Legislative Context**
- **Key SEA Stages and Outputs & Integration**
- **State of Environment Assessment**
- **Current SEA Activity & GIS**
- **Some Actions Required**
- **Some Challenges**
- **Some Realities**
- **Some EPA Action**
- **Way Forward**

## SEA Directive (2004) Article 1 - Objective

- to provide for a high level of protection of the environment
- to contribute to the Integration of Environmental Considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting Sustainable Development  
by ensuring that
- an Environmental Assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment

**STRATEGIC- INTEGRATION of ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSIDERATIONS IN PLAN/PROGRAMME –MAKING PROCESS**

## Habitats Directive - Article 6 Appropriate Assessment

- Any plan or project... ***likely to have a significant effect*** on a Natura 2000 site (s), ***either “individually or in combination” with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment*** of its the implications for the site ***in view of the site’s conservation objectives***

# SEA & AA Requirements

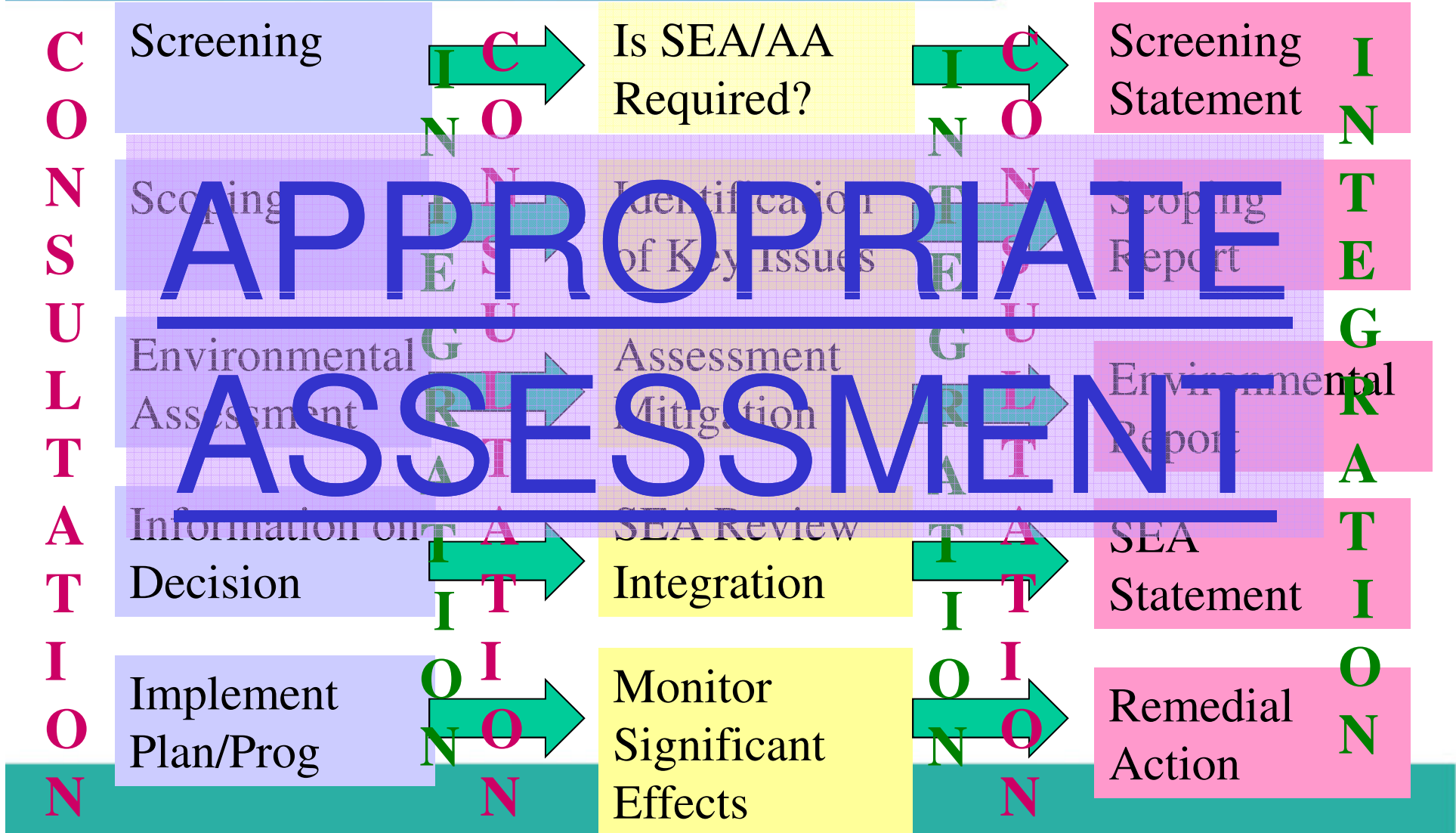
## SEA Decision –Making Requirement

- The Environmental Report and consultation feedback including transboundary “*shall be taken into account*” during the preparation of the P/P and before its adoption.

## AA Decision –Making Requirement

- ...**the competent authority**  
“*shall agree to the plan or project*”  
*only after having ascertained that*  
*“it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned”* ...

# SEA/AA? STAGES and Outputs



## Sectors Subject to SEA Requirements

Tran**S**port

Wa**T**er

Tou**R**ism

PI**A**nning

Was**T**e

Fish**E**ries

Ener**G**y

Indu**s**try

Tele**C**ommunications

For**E**stry

**A**griculture

10  
YEARS

## SEA Environmental Topics include:

- Cultural Heritage - Archaeology, Architecture
- Human Health
- Water
- Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna
- Landscape
- Soil
- Air & Climatic Factors
- Material Assets
- Population
- Inter- relationships between the above

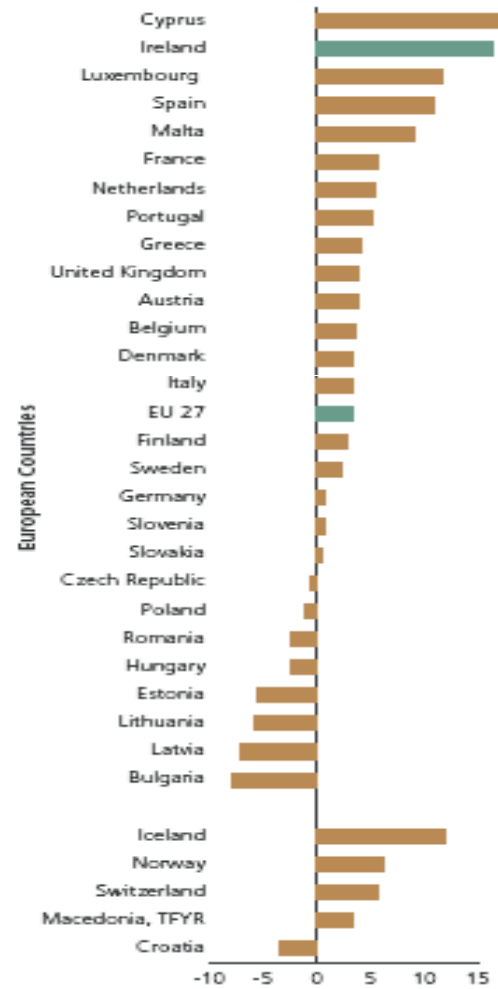
SEA ↔ AA

# State of Environment Assessment

- An evidence assessment of the environment as a whole
- Considers:
  - Socio-economic context and developments
  - **Pressures on environment**
  - **Quality of environment**
  - Societal and other responses
- Purposes
  - **Provide a snapshot of the environment**
  - **Track trends and changes in the environment**
  - **Identify main environmental priorities for the future**
- Most recent report – *Ireland's Environment 2008*

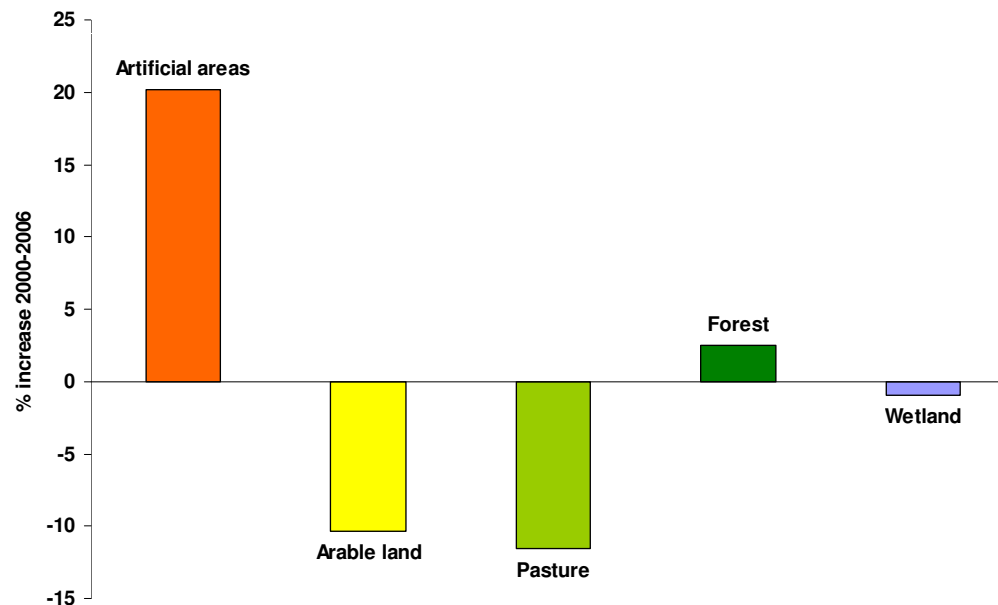
# Population Change 1996-2006

Province	% Change 1996 - 2006
Leinster	+19.3
Munster	+13.5
Connacht	+16.4
Ulster (part)	+14
Total	+16.9



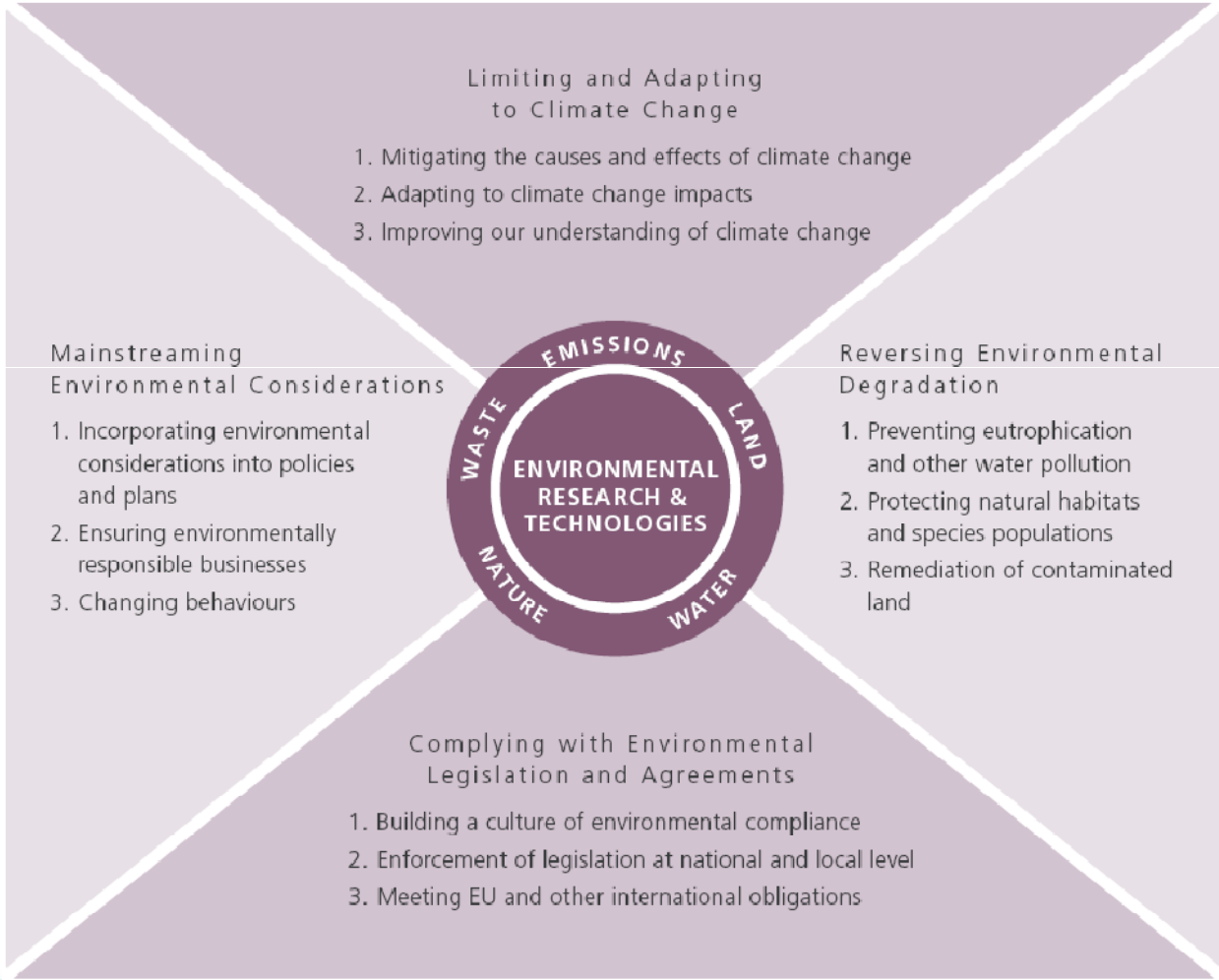
## Urban Settlements & Land Cover Change – Greater Dublin Area

- Approximately 2.6 million people (60 % population) live in 600 urban areas
- Population migrating to suburbs, satellite towns and villages
- Implications for infrastructure, emissions, biodiversity etc.

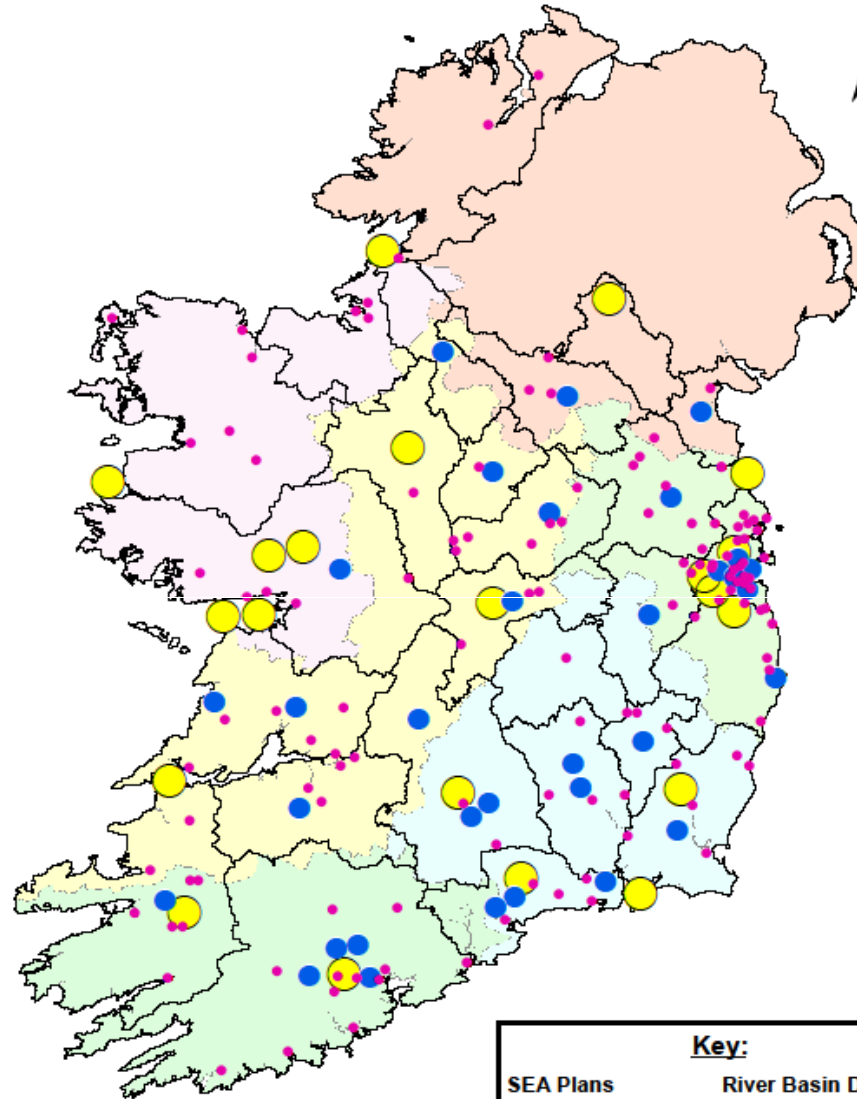


# Ireland's Environment 2008

## Main Environmental Challenges



# Map of SEA Plans



0 30 60 120 180 Kms

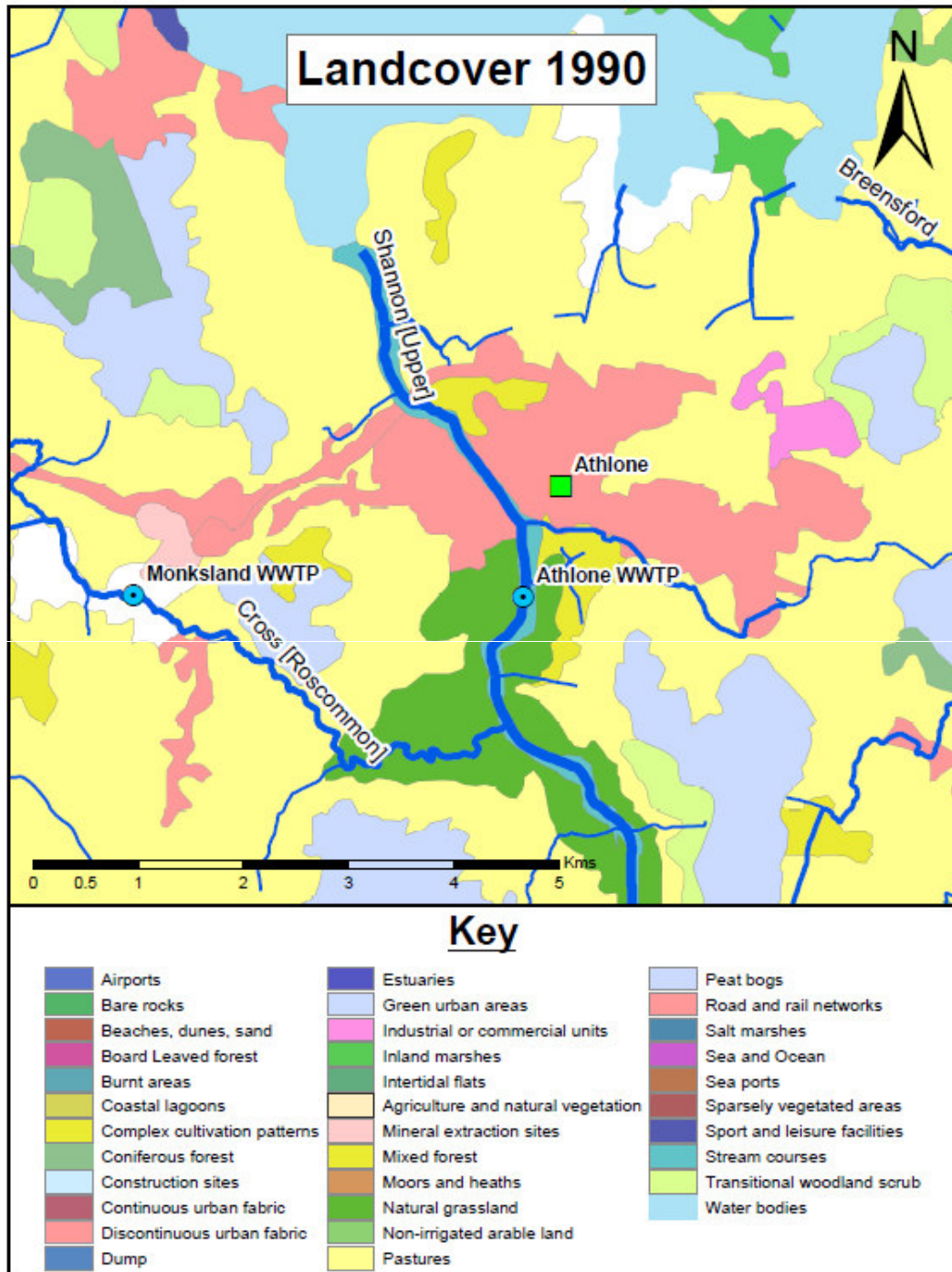
### Key:

#### SEA Plans

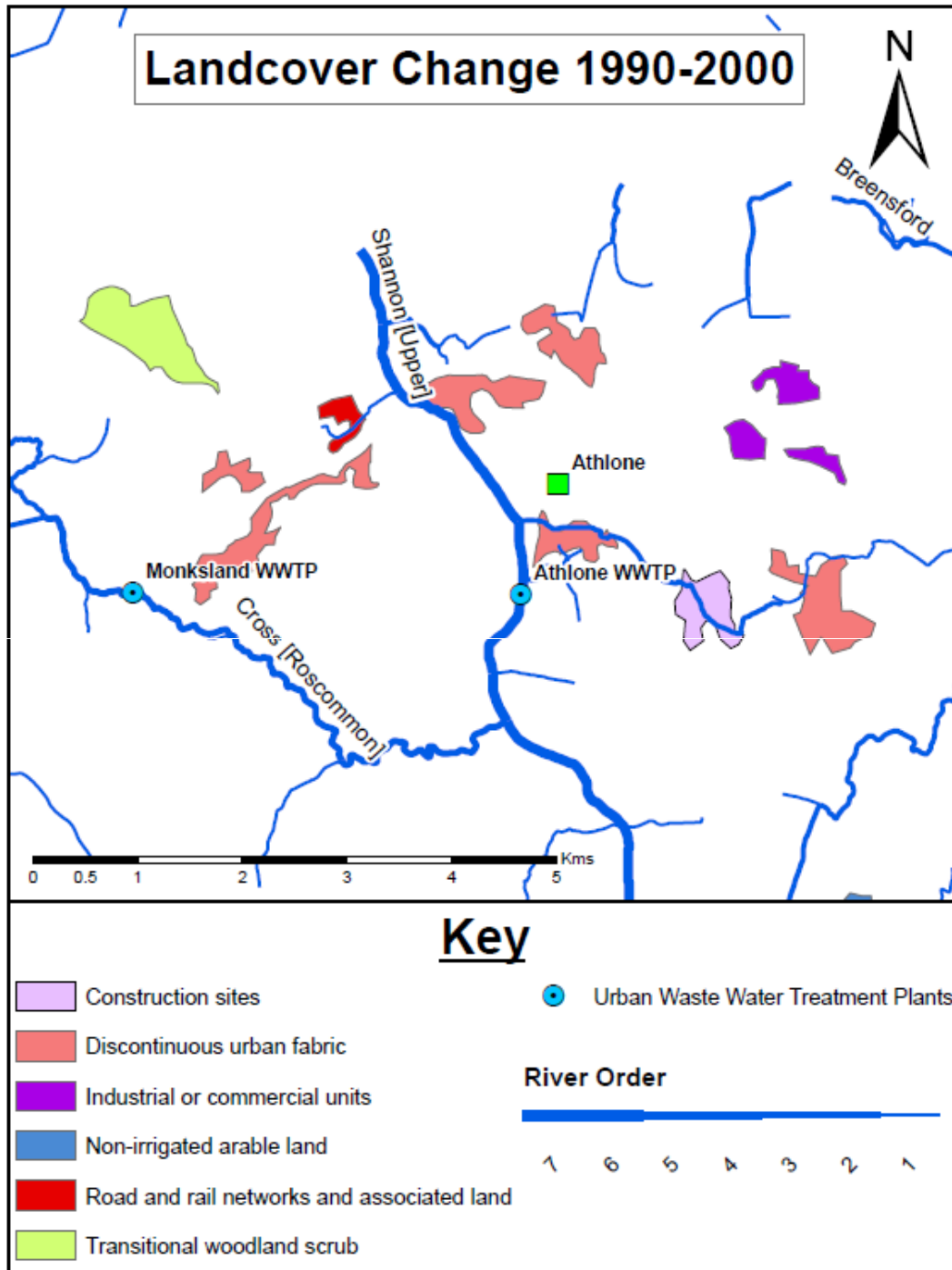
- Local Plans
- County or City Plans
- Regional

#### River Basin Districts

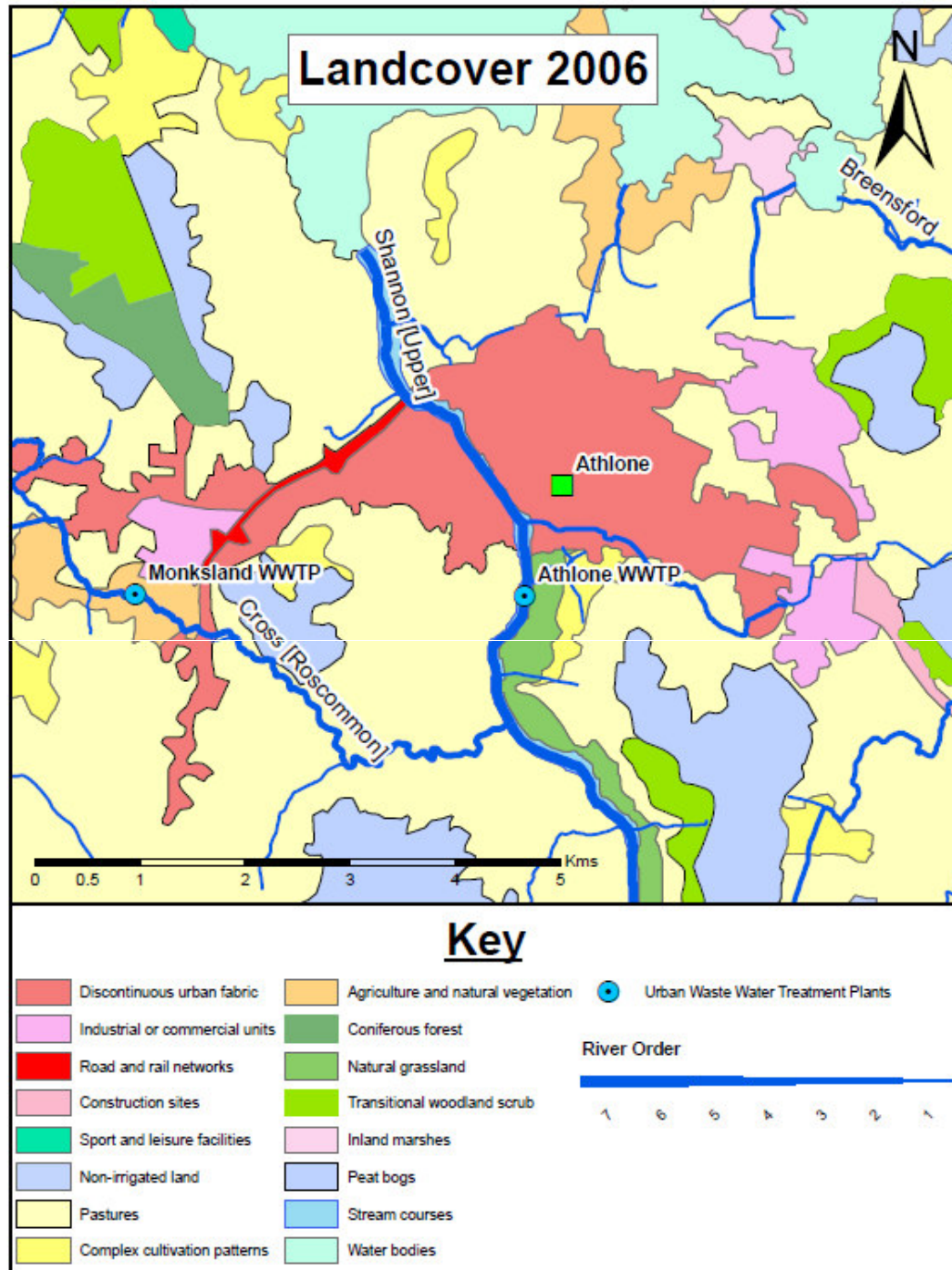
- Eastern RBD
- International RBD
- South Eastern RBD
- Shannon RBD
- South Western RBD
- Western RBD



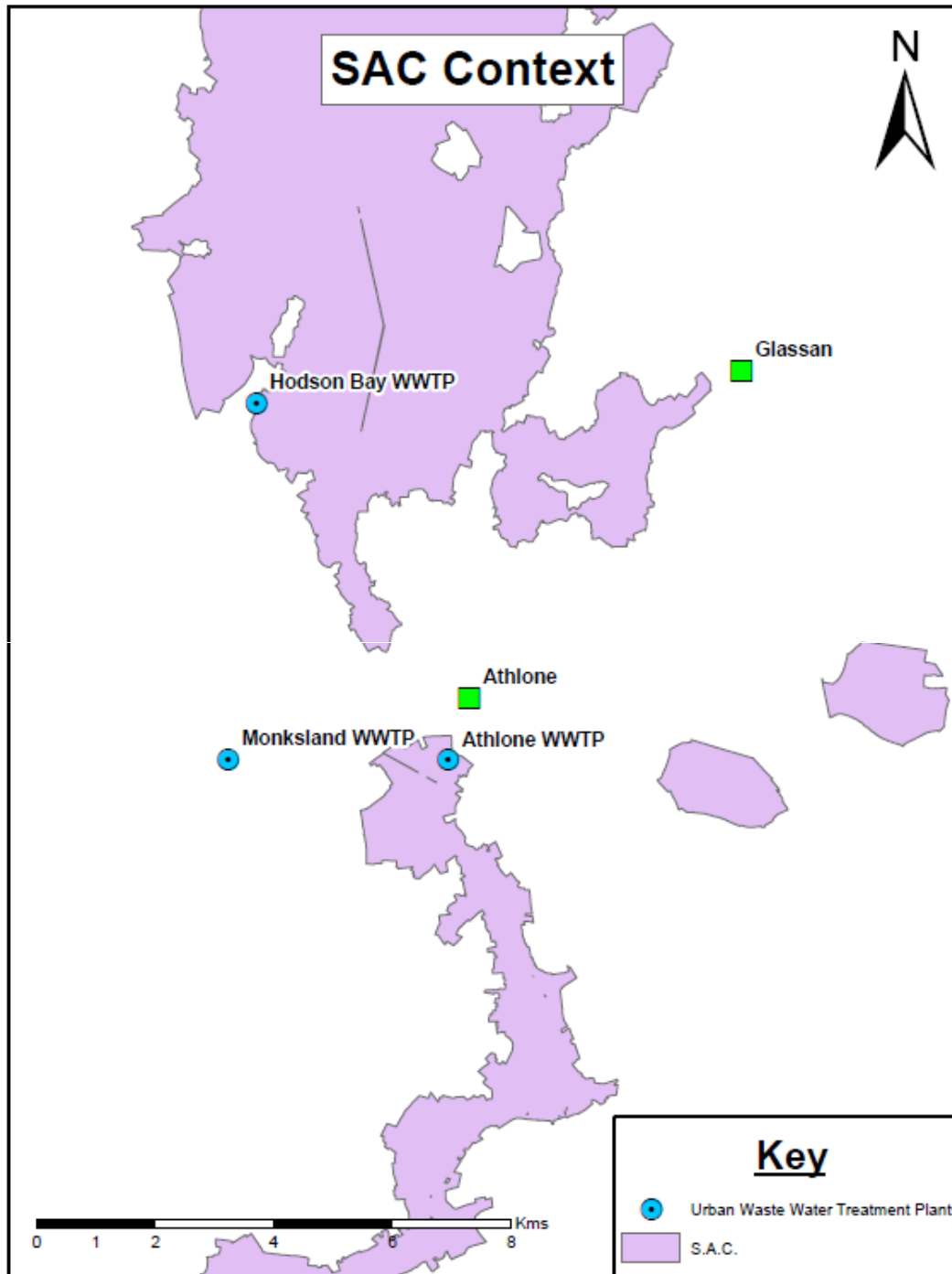
# Understanding Baseline Situation



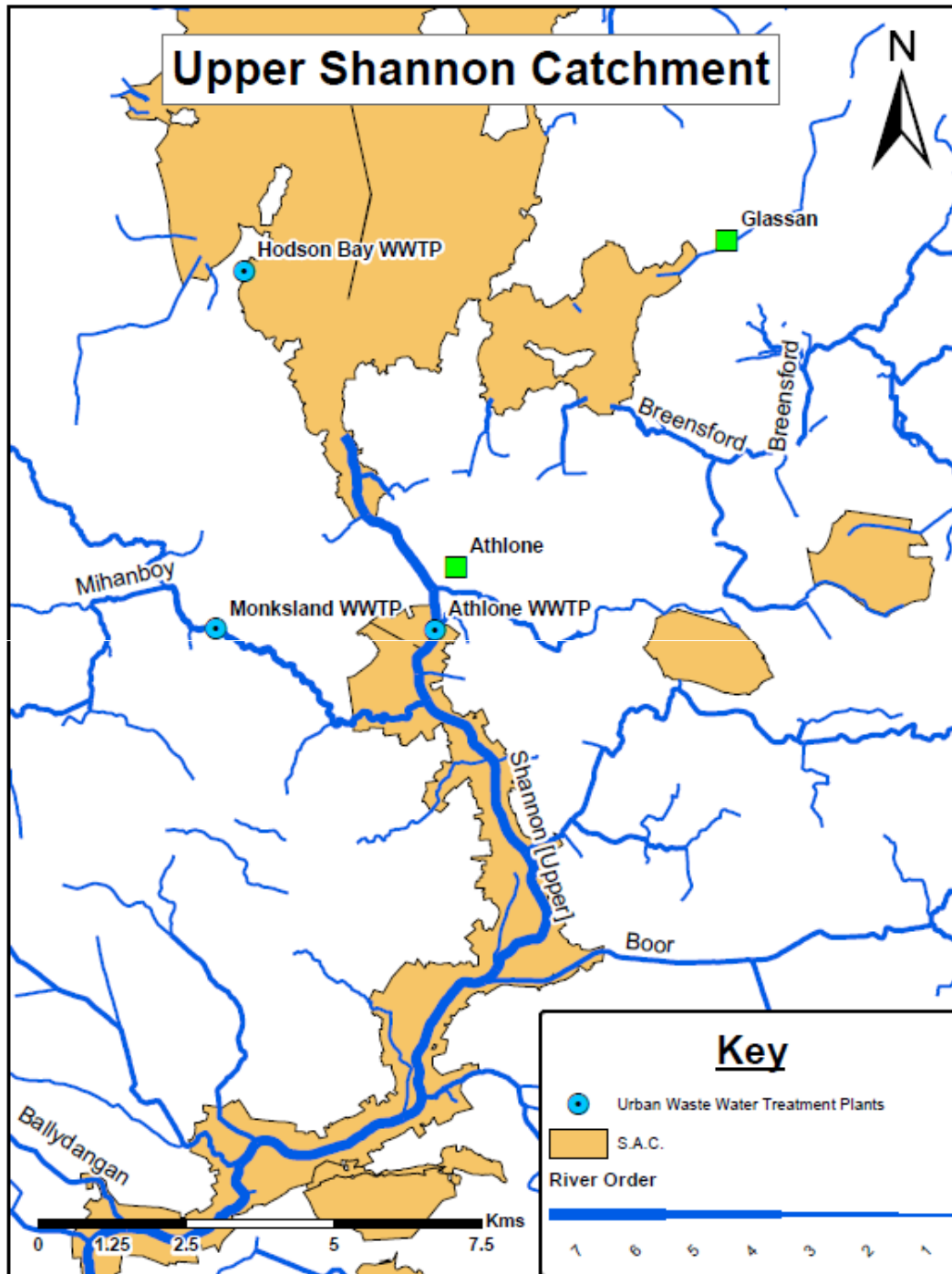
Land Use  
Zoning Directly  
Influences  
Future  
Land Use  
Change



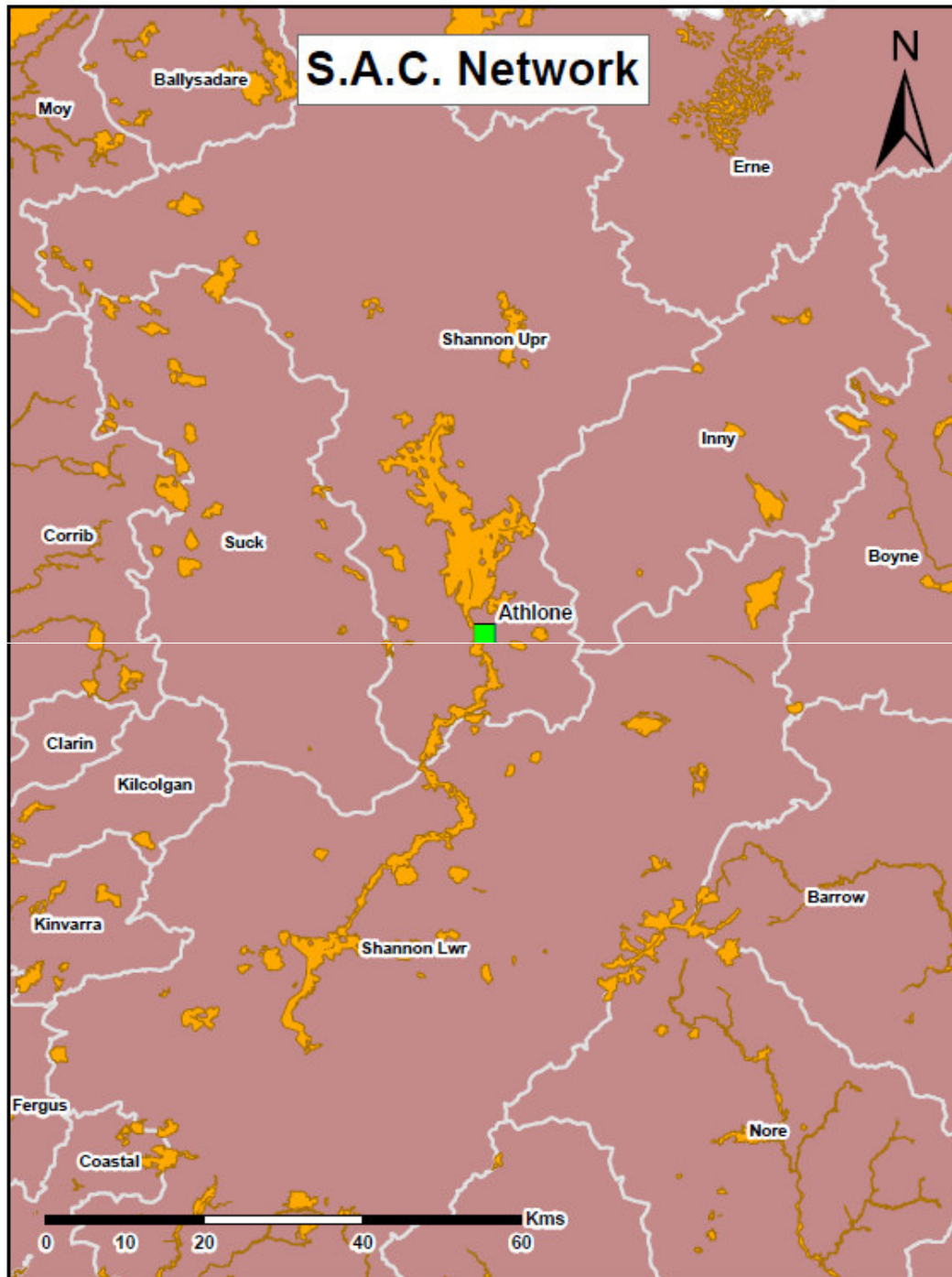
Loss of Biodiversity  
Loss of Wetland Sites  
Loss of Floodplain



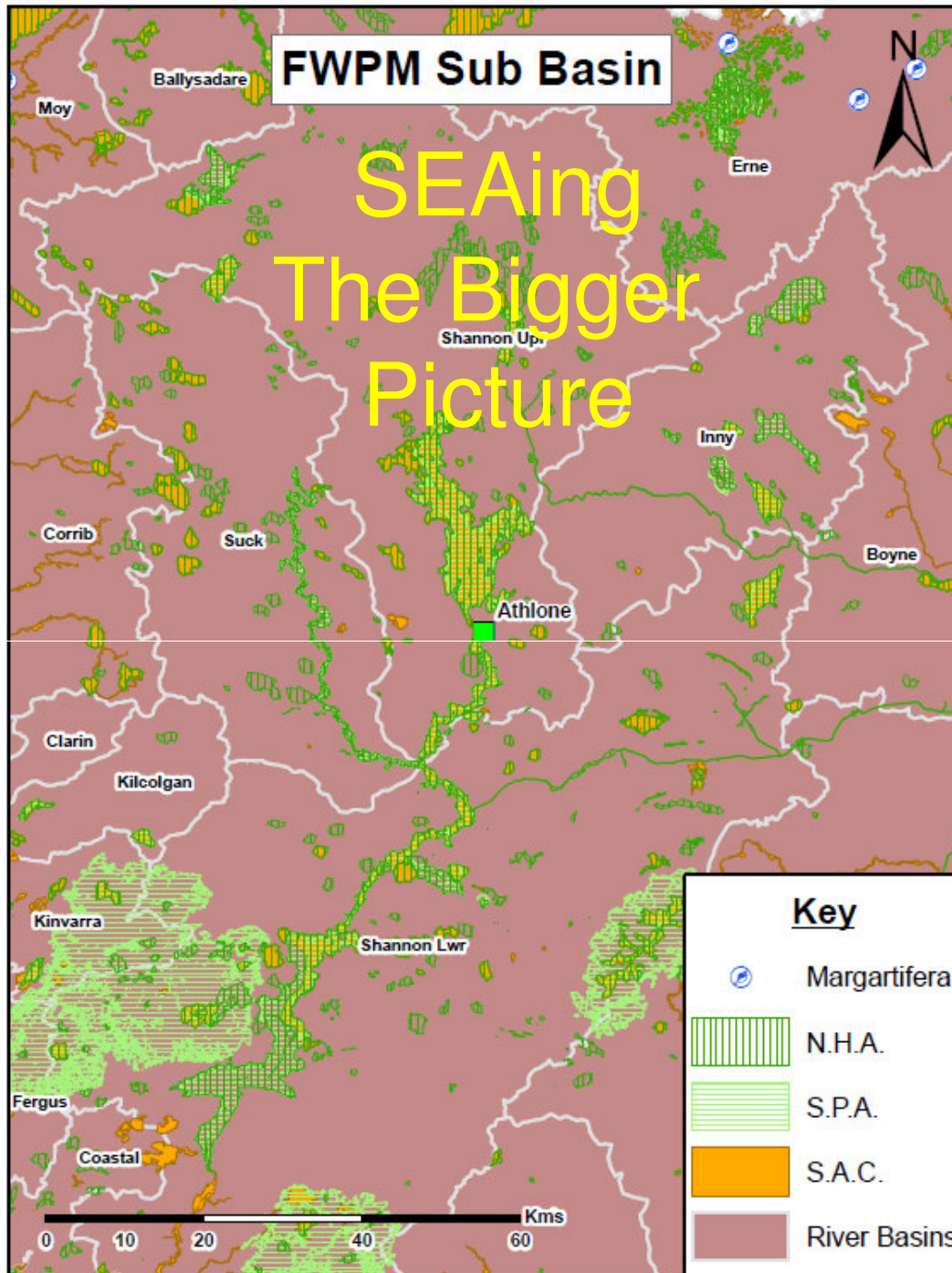
Zone  
of Influence  
of P/P/P?



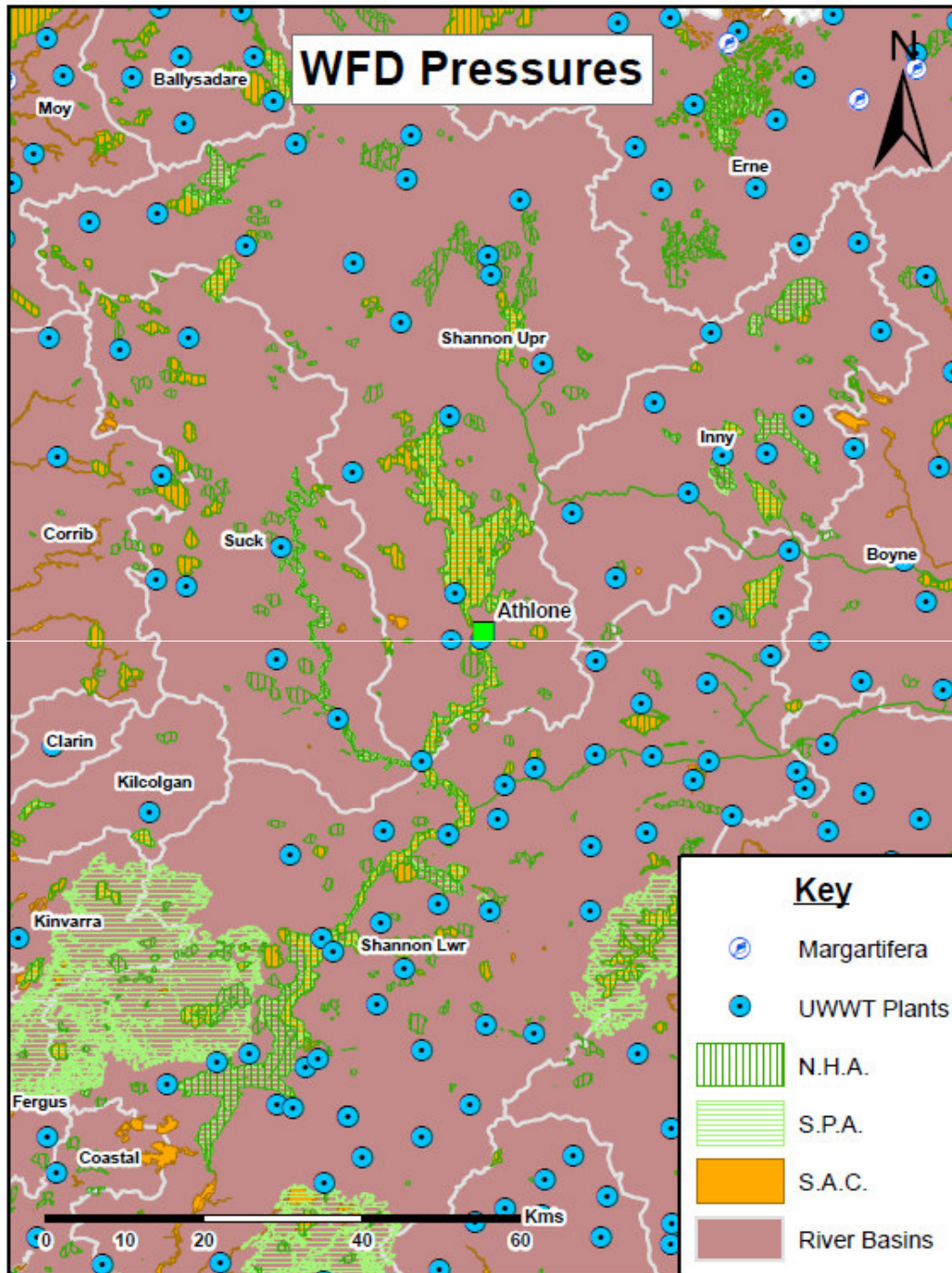
# Wetland Sites Hydrological Regime?



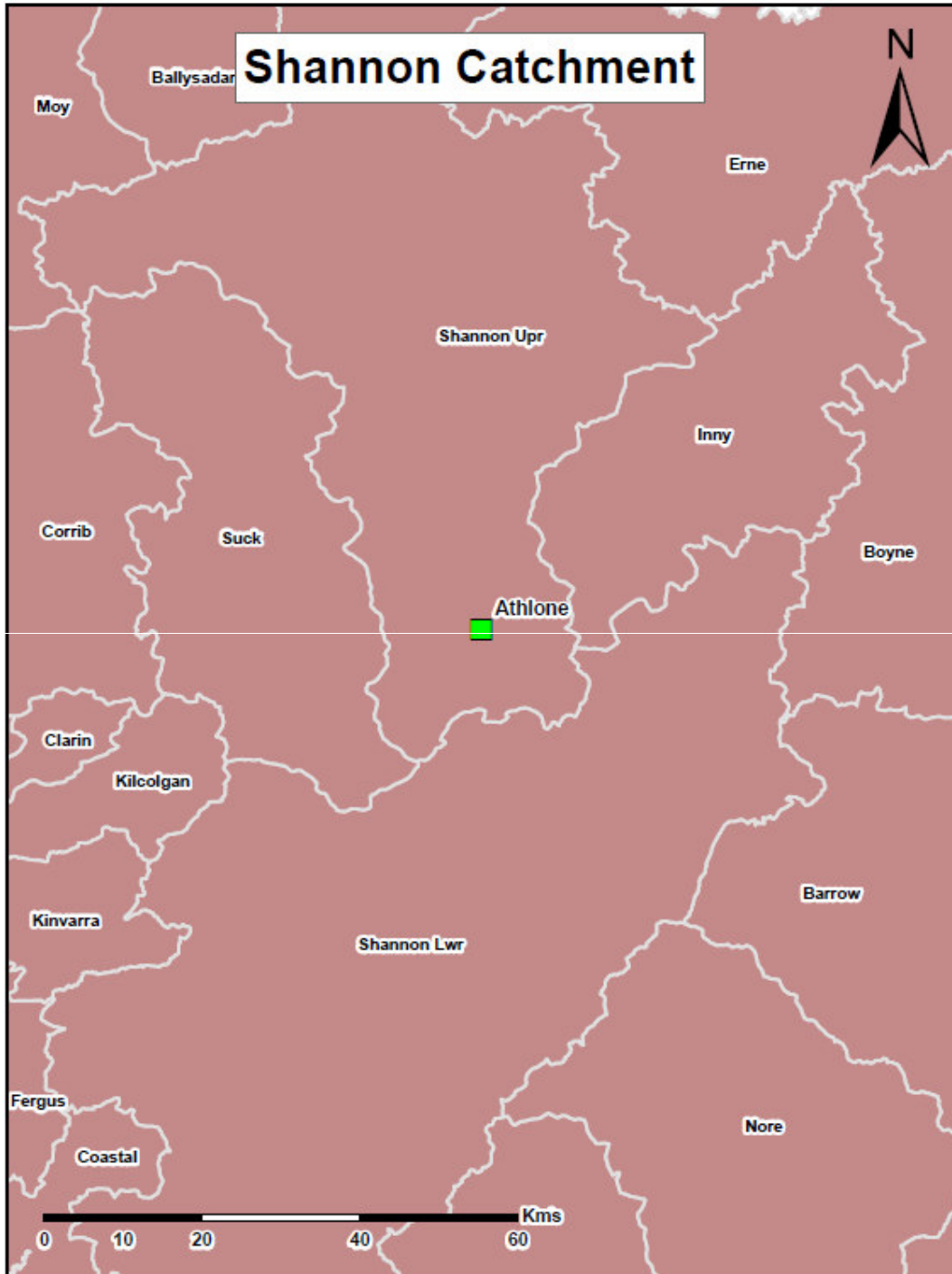
# Integrity of Site(s) Cumulative In-combination Effects



NHA Network  
Wider  
Biodiversity  
WFD RBMPs

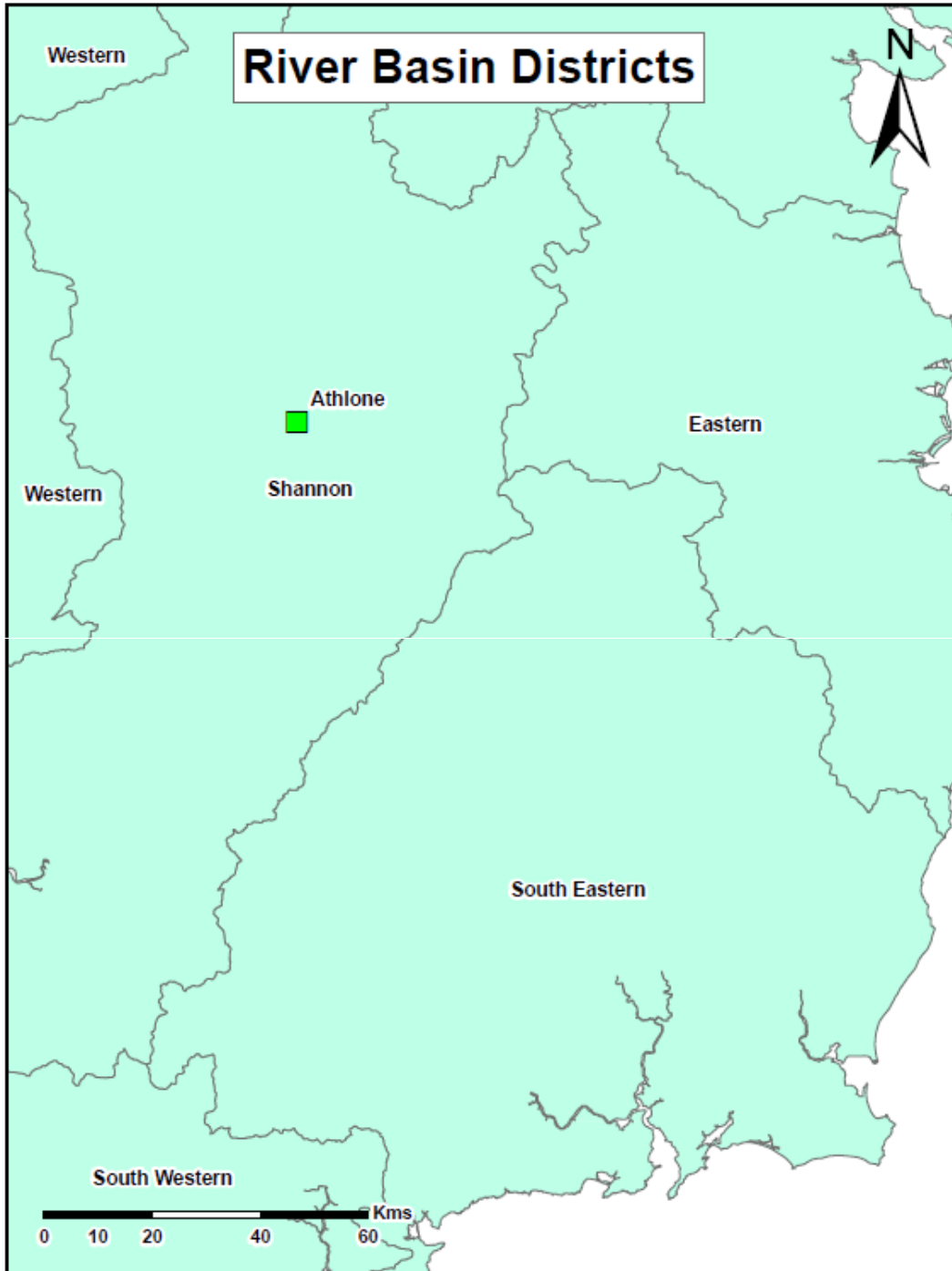


# Understanding Nature & Extent of Existing Environmental Problems



# SEAing The Bigger Picture





# WFD -RBMPs





Common  
Issues  
Sharing  
Information  
Common  
Solutions



## Some Actions Required

- Central National GIS of current datasets
- Priority National Habitat Mapping
- Monitoring Network of Key Habitats/ Species
- Monitoring of Habitat Quality
- Preparation and Implementation of Management Plans
- Central National Biodiversity/SEA/ EIA Databases
- Establish National AA/SEA/FRA Focus Group

## Some !! Challenges

- ❑ Integrated Joined up –Planning & Assessments
- ❑ Cumulative Impact Assessment/ In Combination Effects
- ❑ Full Integration of AA with SEA, EIA and P/P/P
- ❑ Really Inform and Engage Key Decision Makers and the Public
- ❑ Improved Understanding of Ecosystem Dynamics, what maintains the Integrity of Natura 2000 sites & Favourable Conservation Status
- ❑ Halting Biodiversity Loss by 2010
- ❑ Compliance with Article 6 and overall Habitats Directive
- ❑ Fit for Purposes Assessments

## Some!! Realities

- ❑ Economic Downturn
  - Breathing space before next dampened peak in cycle
  - Limited Resources –Assessment, Monitoring, Research
  - Need for Smarter Assessments
- ❑ Ireland supports Annex I Priority Habitats –e.g. Turloughs, Machairs
- ❑ Biodiversity -a National Resource – Green/ Knowledge Economy!
- ❑ Implications of Climate Change
- ❑ SEA well underway ~200 SEA's since 2004 ~ Some Sectors to engage
- ❑ AA for Plans/ Programmes has commenced since 2006/2007
- ❑ SEA/ AA/ FRA- Significant tool in Sustainable DeZoning/ Rezoning
- ❑ Many Players - Collective Responsibility, Accountability, Actions,

## Some EPA SEA/AA Actions:

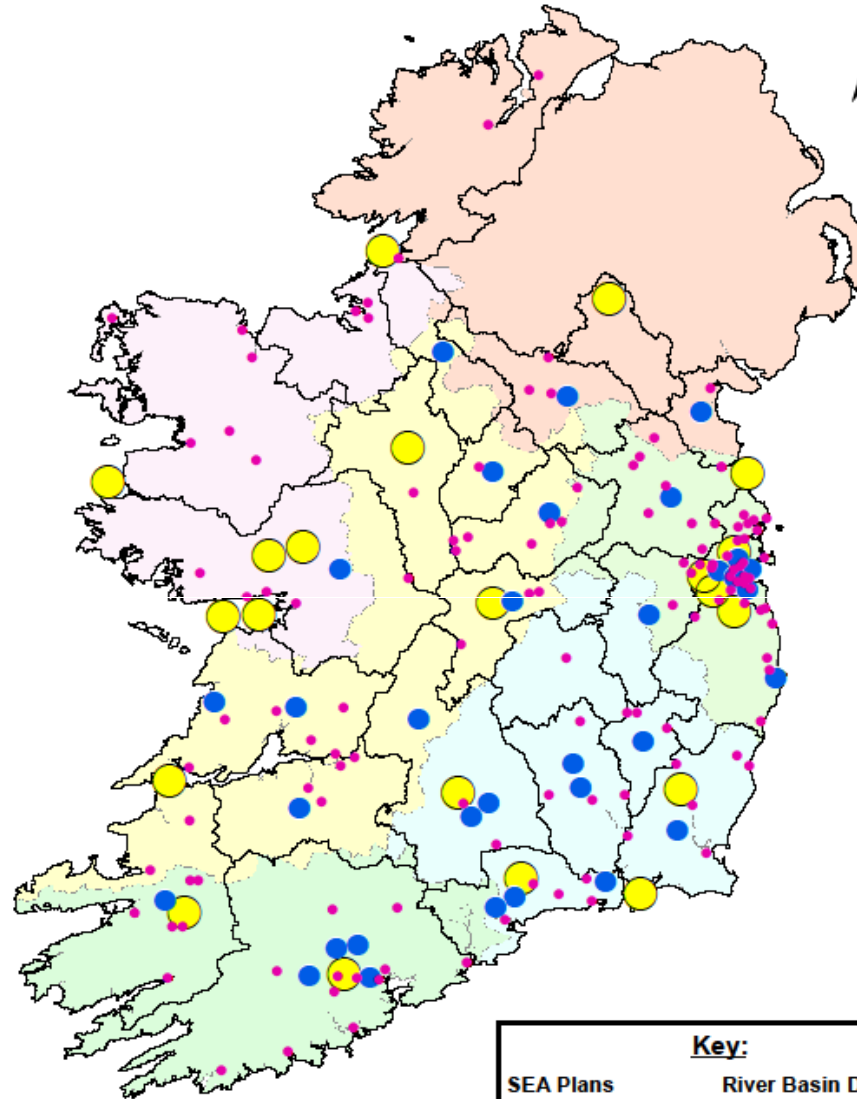
### Short Term

- Best Practice Notes CIA/ In- Combination Effects
- Recording of AAs with SEA Draft P/Ps
- Effectiveness of SEA Review - AA?!
- Inclusion of SEA activity/data on Website
- EPA Biodiversity Action Plan

### Ongoing

- Promote Integration of Policies and Objectives in P/Ps
- Promote Integrated/ Joined- up Planning / assessments
- Review of Integration of AA Outputs in SEA/ P/P
- Promote linkages with NI Authorities- Transboundary
- Support Applied Biodiversity related Research

# Map of SEA Plans



### Key:

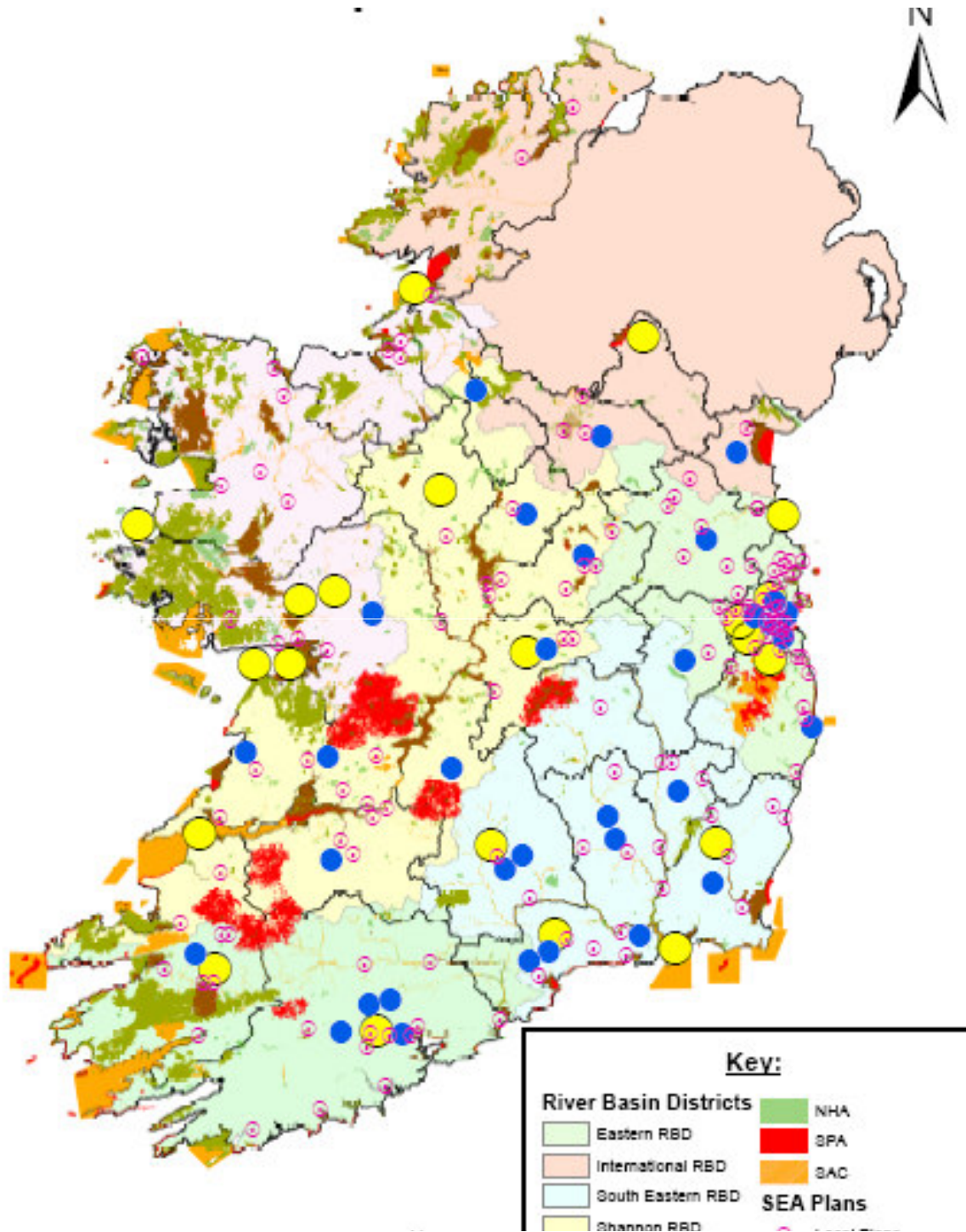
#### SEA Plans

- Local Plans
- County or City Plans
- Regional

#### River Basin Districts

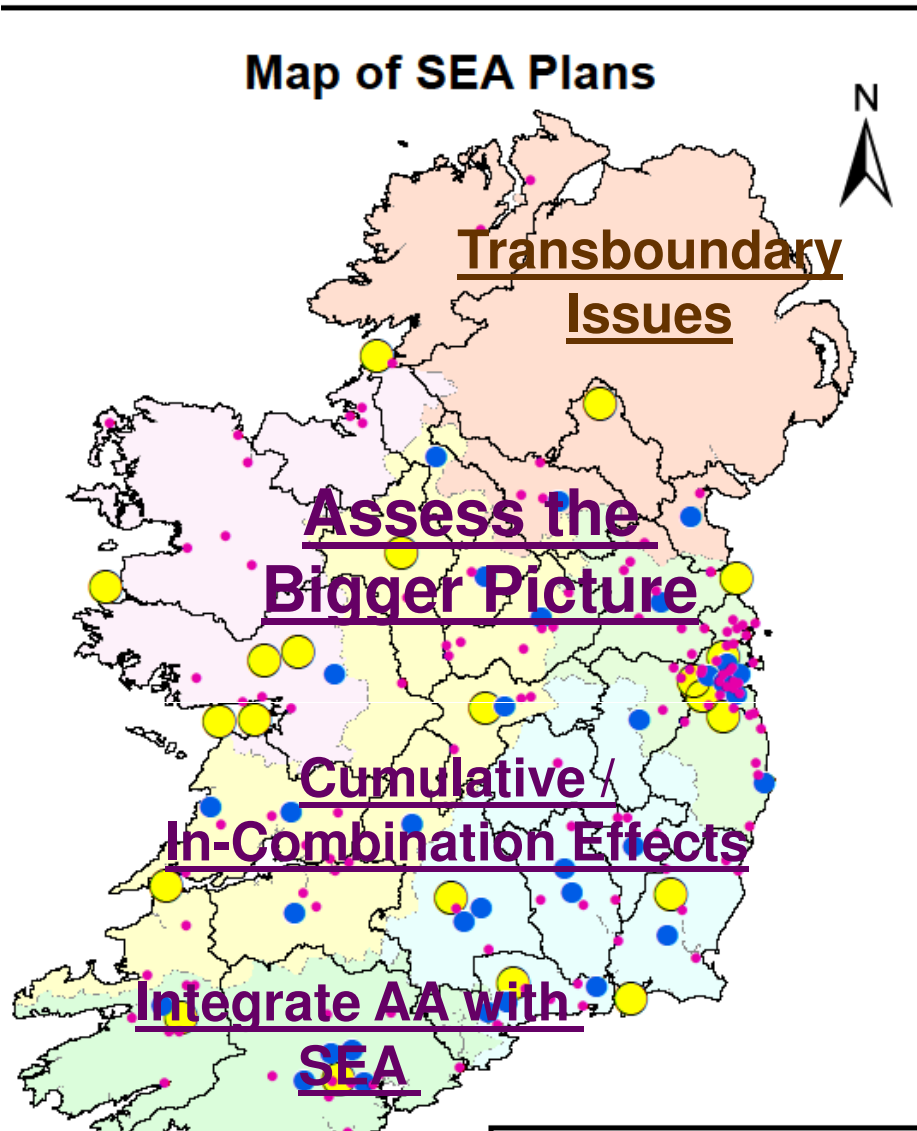
- Eastern RBD
- International RBD
- South Eastern RBD
- Shannon RBD
- South Western RBD
- Western RBD

0 30 60 120 180 Kms



## AA/SEA Best Practice

- Forward Plan
- Know Scope of P/P
- Zone of Influence of P/P
- Focus on Key Issues
- Full Range of Impacts
- Natura 2000 Sites
- Assess at relevant level
- Prioritise Avoidance
- Precautionary Principle
- Identify other P/Ps & P's
- Realistic Mitigation



**Bring About  
Environmentally  
Sustainable Development**